[Chapters 8 UbD and 8,11,12 MI](http://edu221spring2013class.wikispaces.com/B1+Chapters+8+UbD+and+8%2C11%2C12+MI)

With these three chapters, Thomas Armstrong is going deeper into the importance of utilizing multiple intelligence theory in the classroom to address the huge differences that are obvious in a student population. He says that classrooms are “microsocieties with student citizens”, each with their own role to play and desires and interests. Applying MI theory in management cases will keep the class exceptionally smooth. Just as teachers need to develop lesson plans considering the various learning styles students exemplify, they must develop rules and orders with the same things in mind. It will help the students better understand their expectations and be more comfortable in the lesson. However, MI theory is just a context, so not one is good for all. The individual needs to be recognized, which moves us into chapter 11. Each student has their own strengths and weaknesses, and it’s useless and detrimental to the growth of the student and the impact of our lessons if we focus on the latter. This goes the same for disabilities. I, similarly to Armstrong (I suppose), am really irked by that word. Yes, a student may have a deficiency in an area, but that does not mean we need to focus on that loss. Labeling students as disabled is a hugely weighted term, and the students will be pulled down by it. The powerful learning styles the students use should be celebrated and utilized to their benefit, and, as Armstrong says, “MI theory can help teachers identify a student’s strengths, and this information can serve as a basis for deciding what kinds of interventions are most appropriate.” MI theory treats all students, no matter the disability, as learners first, considering their strongest and weakest areas of learning. Utilizing the strengths of the students will boost their self-esteem and engage them in the class, while building their intelligence and learning styles.   
Finally, in chapter 12, Armstrong continues to talk about working on students’ cognitive skills. Personally, I never really enjoyed philosophy and get very easily confused by the many terms, so I find it particularly daunting to try and teach the students cognitive theory – but I agree it’s very important. MI theory is all about building on the students’ various learning styles, but if we don’t give them opportunities to grow through new learning strategies, they’ll never build and refine their skills. Chapter 8 of UbD also focused on student achievement, while looking at it through a grading scope. Tomlinson urges teachers to not focus on what is right or wrong, a strategy I know too well (and suffer under). In so many situations a student may present extreme effort or enthusiasm but receive a low grade due to wrong information, while another student easily understands the material and spent none of the time the other student did. Teachers need to appreciate both students and not favor either, not matter how easier one is to grade. Another point she brings up is that we don’t *need* to grade at the extent we do. Classrooms should be places where students are trying to understand the material and apply it, not remember it long enough to copy down on a test for a grade. We, as teachers, should want the students to utilize our information in the outside world, so they’re well prepared and ready to look at real-world problems in not such a black and white system, as they’ve been trained to do for years.

[Chapters 7,8,9,10 FIAE](http://edu221spring2013class.wikispaces.com/B1+Chapters+7%2C8%2C9%2C10+FIAE)

Rick Wormeli has set-up the book in a way that leads up to a huge contention point among many educators across disciplines: grading. He dissected and detailed the ways many teachers attack assessment, and provided options and lessons to allow all students to do well on tests and assignments. However, this is all useless if our grading methods are faulty and illogical. Chapters seven and eight detail the why? and what? of grades and grading students. He begins the section explaining how grades are completely subjective, and I totally agree. Throughout middle and high school I had very different methods between teachers on how they graded my assignments. Some would provide detailed feedback on how I could do better, but others would simply write a grade with no notes or suggestions. I've also experienced, almost exclusively in college, teachers who are very rewarding and kind during class and on formative assessments, but get hardcore when it comes to summative assessments, and I'm left shocked and confused. Grades are necessary in the classroom, but they shouldn't be used as an end-all, be-all. They are weighted symbols than can positively or negatively effect the students' opinion on the class and teacher. It's so important to provide explanation for your grading and give the opportunity for student to meet with you to discuss their success in the class. For all you know, they 'D' student - whatever that means - could be extremely proud and confident in their work. Grades are to scale and follow progress and assess students. For them to be effective, teachers must use written or oral response to communicate with the student.  
Chapters nine and ten have Wormeli discussing the actual exercise of taking tests. Obviously, it's never always alright to assign a test, and it's especially not right to grade everything given to the students. I agree with Wormeli that graded assignments should be saved for the big, end-of-unit, formative assessments, like the performance task objective - this is what Wormeli urges for in Chapter ten. Every other assignment is about working with the student to aid their learning, not to judge them on their retention of material. I think it's really important that the students understand that the point of them being in the class is to learn and grow, not to do well on a test every week. Too many students fall into a rut of repetition and quick retention that gets them through school, but with little concrete knowledge. The other side of this, however, is the problem with how grade-oriented the current educational climate is. How can we pass students if we don't have grades? Is it enough to pass them for just finishing the work? I think the answer for these both is a big no. A system is what needs to be created, one where timeliness and correctness is graded alongside creativity and comprehension. I need to know they're being assessed thoroughly, but they should know that their knowledge is key.

[Chapters 11,12,13,14 FIAE](http://edu221spring2013class.wikispaces.com/B1+Chapters+11%2C12%2C13%2C14+FIAE)

These later chapters of Wormeli's *Fair Isn't Always Equal*deals solely with the topic of grading. While some of this reading can get tedious, these chapters on grading were especially interesting to me as a teacher, as there is so much to consider and so much to take into account when grading assignments. Did students know they were getting graded on this? How do I grade their opinions? Should I use grades as a punishment? How can I get it so that students' aren't so grade-obsessed? Theses questions and ideas surrounding them were dealt with deftly here.  
At the beginning Wormeli dives into the topic of grading specific students - namely under and over achieving ones. The problem with giving zeros is a tricky one. I agree with the author that we should not use zeros to punish the students, as the extremely low grade will largely impact their grades, but I also have a problem with giving the students a 60. If they didn't do the work, why should they receive a grade? Won't this encourage not doing the work rather than trying to do it, as they see no matter what they will receive a passing grade? A way to alleviate this in my book would to grade large assignments, one where they get class time to work on them so they have no excuse not to do it, and to grade homework on a done/not done duality. This chapter also details how to grade gifted students, and he says it's more about what we provide them with as a test and not so much how we grade. I totally agree with this, and I like the idea of editing tests.  
Chapter Twelve details what scales we are grading on. He provides two types: a four-point scale and a one hundred-point scale. While the latter, in the form of percentages, tends to be more mathematically sounds, I find that it doesn’t allow for the student’s voice to be heard. To me, one-hundred scales should be used on tests and quizzes, giving students examples of how they will be graded on standardized testing. A four-point scale is much more efficient in my mind, especially for an English class, as it allows student expression to come through and can be graded in multiple different categories. It also takes away the weighted baggage of getting a 100%.  
Wormeli then goes on to talk about grade books and report cards. I found the prior to be very helpful, as it’ll be extremely important to me to have access to all students’ grades in a simple and easy to use format. There needs to be plenty of room, as he suggests, for my own comments as well, so that the pages don’t look like an accountant’s workbook but rather a dedicated teachers grade book. Finally, chapter fourteen details report cards. In a similar fashion to the grade book, I agree that report cards should not just be numbers and letter grades – they should be in-depth looks into the minds and intelligences of the students. It seems ridiculous to me that by high school there is only room for a sentence or two about the student’s progress, and that they must choose from a preset list of phrases. If this is the case, teachers should work diligently to email parents and guardians and have them involved. Producing a grading system like this gets the parents more involved in the curriculum and makes the students more involved in the material and their understanding rather than their numerical grades.